STD facility on local dialing

†362. SHRIMATI KUM KUM RAI: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the number of States from where STD facility is being provided on local dialing in the country; and

(b) by when this facility would be provided to other States?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) Subscriber Trunk Dialing (STD) facility can be availed without dialing '0' among following States/Union Territories:

(i) Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Manipur and Tripura
(ii) Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh
(iii) Bihar and Jharkhand
(iv) Uttaranchal and Uttar Pradesh
(v) Goa and Maharashtra
(vi) Pondicherry and Tamil Nadu
(vii) Sikkim and West Bengal
(viii) Daman Diu, Silvasa (Dadra and Nagar Haveli) and Gujarat
(ix) Lakshadweep, Minicoy and Kerala
(x) Chandigarh and Punjab
(xi) Part of Uttar Pradesh, Haryana and Delhi

(b) No time-frame has been fixed to provide this facility to other States.

Global confidence in BPO industry

363. SHRI B. K. HARIPRASAD: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the recent call centre scam near Delhi involving leakage of bank account numbers, bank card details and secret passwords of more than 1000 British bank customers holds grave ramifications for the Indian BPO industry;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) whether the British media has branded the employees of Indian BPOs as crooked with warnings on its website flashing your life on sale; and

(c) whether Government have taken note of this and if so, what measures are being taken to restore the global confidence in Indian BPO industry?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) No, Sir.

(b) A report was appeared on June 23, 2005 in The Sun (UK), resulting from an investigation by their reporter, about the sale of customer data by an employee of a call centre near Delhi. The report "An Indian crook sold an undercover Sun reporter bank account details" was flashed only on the website of The Sun. All other media in the UK carried a balanced story.

(c) The Government took note of this and earlier incidents. Government and NASSCOM view that a case of theft of information or a breach of a customer's confidentiality must be treated seriously.

Section 66 of the IT Act, 2000 provides for stringent penalties for infringement of such incidents including breaching of confidentiality, privacy and hacking of a computer system. A high level meeting involving Government officials, NASSCOM etc. was held to discuss this issue. The problem is not unique to a single nation. Such problems had occurred across the world and this is one off such case. Indian BPO industry undertaking work for UK companies already comply with all the requirements of the Data Protection Act, as well as other security and confidentiality safeguards. The following suggestions have emerged to restore the Global confidence in Indian BPO industry:

— Introduction of amendments to the IT Act, 2000 that will provide stringent measures against the criminals.

— Providing training and supporting Indian law enforcement agencies to ensure that they are well equipped to tackle cyber crimes.

— Establishment of a register of IT professionals to ensure that only suitable staff are employed in the industry.